DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 006 CS 210 142

AUTHOR Ross, Karen A.
TITLE School-College Cooperation in Teaching Composition: Programs and Possibilities.
PUB DATE 5 May 86
NOTE 15p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; *Cooperative Programs; Educational Cooperation; Freshman Composition; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Improvement; Professional Development; Program Descriptions; Secondary Education; Teacher Centers; *Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Workshops; Writing (Composition); Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS *Writing Projects

ABSTRACT

In the last 10 to 15 years, a number of higher education institutions have initiated model cooperative programs with high schools to strengthen secondary composition instruction. The Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) in California involves a 5-week summer seminar in which both secondary and postsecondary instructors write the kinds of compositions they often assign and also share teaching concerns. Syracuse (New York) University's Project Advance allows qualified high school seniors to take introductory university courses for college credit. In the Queens College (New York) Project, a cooperative language arts articulation program, college faculty and secondary instructors meet monthly to discuss common concerns. The Department of English at the University of Illinois operates several cooperative ventures, including workshops, the Grading Exchange, and the University Associates in Rhetoric Program. Iowa boasts several successful cooperative programs. The Iowa Writing Project and the Heartland Writers Project are both modeled after the BAWP. The Associates in Freshman English Program, established by the Iowa State University's department of English, closely resembles the associate's program at the University of Illinois. In addition, the Iowa Student as Critic Conference sponsors a critical essay contest for high school students. These model programs have paved the way for further cooperative ventures in Iowa. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Karen A. Ross
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Karen A. Ross
Dr. Carol Kay
Hg Ed 567
May 5, 1986

FD275006

School-College Cooperation in Teaching Composition: Programs and Possibilities

Amid the grumblings of college professors about the increasingly poorer writing skills of entering freshmen, some higher education institutions have initiated cooperative programs with high schools to help strengthen the teaching of secondary composition. These institutions agree with Ernest Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, who says the problem is "not a secondary school crisis but an education crisis" (qtd. in Stanfield 45). Established over the past ten to fifteen years, some of these cooperative ventures have served as models for programs across the United States, including several established in Iowa. What are these model programs and what types of ventures are operating in Iowa? What possibilities are there for further cooperation in Iowa?

Background

Before considering specific cooperative programs in composition across the nation and in Iowa, let's first examine some of the general characteristics of such ventures. As Boyer and Stanfield point out, school-college collaboration is not a new phenomenom: universities existed long before high schools,

CS 210 142

and through their admission requirements, higher education institutions virtually dictated the high school curricula (5; 45). But over the years, the two systems have grown apart, and only in the last few years have many serious attempts been made to establish a collaborative relationship between the two systems.

Barriers to Partnerships

Two major barriers exist which hinder the establishment of school-college partnerships. First, the institutions have separate systems of governance and as Boyer notes in an interview with the editors of Change, ". . . we tend to operate within the organizational units we've created" (19). Ambach emphasizes the detrimental effect of this barrier:

> Competition for government or private resources for the maintenance of education is so severe that it threatens to submerge the common interests and interdependence of the different levels of education beneath the drive for institutional survival. (22)

A second barrier to partnerships is that the two institutions are separated by what Maeroff calls a "mutual distrust between those who teach at the two levels" (49). Stanfield agrees and points out that such distrust is reflected in each system's having its own full complement of state and national organizations (46). Thus, collaboration seems unlikely between two systems competing for resources and unwilling to share membership in the same professional organizations.

Elements of Successful Ventures

Despite the barriers, successful school-college ventures have been established. Stanfield has identified five common elements of collaborative programs which have worked:

1. They are joint institutional and faculty efforts.
2. They tend to arise from individual departments, not the schools of education in the colleges.
3. They have a full-time staff.
4. They have dependable funding.
5. They have voluntary, highly flexible instruction by teachers who shape the program as they go along. (47)

Wilbur notes that probably the most important factor in the success of school-college partnerships is a cooperative spirit (44).

Purposes of Cooperative Programs

Looking specifically at the literature describing cooperative programs which foster the teaching of composition, we can find five main purposes for establishing such partnerships:

1. Increase articulation between secondary and college composition courses
2. Strengthen the composition skills of secondary students by improving the secondary composition curriculum and the teaching of writing
3. Provide challenge for high ability secondary composition students

4. Provide opportunities for professional growth for secondary composition teachers
5. Ease the transition from secondary composition class to college composition class

An examination of some successful cooperative composition ventures shows how several of these purposes are often met in one program.

Model Cooperative Ventures

Although many cooperative composition programs have been established in the past several years, a few such programs have served and continue to serve as models for other schools and colleges. Among these model cooperative programs are (a) the Bay Area Writing Project, (b) Syracuse University's Project Advance, (c) the Queens English Project, and (d) several programs sponsored by the Department of English at the University of Illinois.

Bay Area Writing Project

The Bay Area Writing Project was started in 1973 by a group of Berkeley English professors to improve composition teaching in area high schools (Stanfield 46). Area English teachers, including both secondary and post-secondary instructors, attended a five-week summer institute where they wrote the kinds of compositions they often assigned, shared classroom successes, and discussed common concerns about teaching composition. The

project has become a national program, serving over one thousand teachers each year (Stanfield 46).

Project Advance

Syracuse University's Project Advance (SUPA) allows qualified high school seniors to take Syracuse University courses (Wilbur 42). Established in the mid 1970's, the program offers seven introductory courses, including freshman composition. The courses are taught in high schools by high school teachers who are supervised by professors from the appropriate departments at SU. The minimum qualifications for most SUPA instructors are undergraduate and advanced degrees in the content area and at least five years' teaching experience in the specific course area. Students receive college credit for the courses. In 1981, the program served 4000 students per year from 77 high schools in New York and surrounding states (Wilbur 42). Research has shown that SUPA students perform as well as, if not better than, on-campus students when taking higher level on-campus courses (Wilbur 43).

Queens English Project

The Queens English Project, Queens College, is an example of a cooperative language arts articulation program. Kaufman reports that in the early 1970's, the twenty high school English chairmen in Queens County, New York, and twenty members of the Queens College English and secondary education faculty began meeting monthly to discuss common concerns (4,5). After five years of monthly meetings, they obtained a grant and wrote

an articulated English curriculum from the junior year in high school through the freshman year in college. Kaufman says their goal was "to prepare the high school students so that they could enroll in our freshman English course and would not have to enroll in the basic English course or in a reading course" (8).

The articulation project consists of (a) a syllabus for use in the high school English classes, (b) seminars on teaching the classes, (c) reading and writing labs in each high school, (d) released time for teachers to run the labs, and (e) a special class to train student tutors for the program (Friedlander 11). Kaufman wrote in 1979 that although the program was not completed, the students were writing more and they reported that they liked the classes (11).

Department of English, University of Illinois

The Department of English at the University of Illinois operates several cooperative ventures which serve as model programs.

Workshops in high schools. Organized in 1978, the University of Illinois' Association for Practical Composition presents workshops at high school conferences and institutes throughout the state. Payne reports that school districts usually initiate the workshops and send sample student papers and a list of questions concerning composition to the Association (personal interview). A team of eight or nine English faculty members visits the school and talks on the different subjects suggested by the list of questions.

Grading Exchange. An outgrowth of the high school workshops, the Grading Exchange helps introduce high school students to university standards of evaluation. Perrin describes the program's operation:

1. High school teachers send student papers to the Association for Practical Composition for evaluation.
2. Papers are returned in three or four weeks with comments and grades.
3. The professor who evaluated the papers is a guest speaker in the composition classroom two or three days after the papers are returned.
4. The follow-up session includes either general information on college writing expectations or techniques for better writing. Time is always allowed for students' questions.
5. The grading costs one dollar per paper; follow-up sessions are twenty dollars per class period plus mileage. (407)

Perrin says the program also allows university professors to discover what high school students and teacher expect in freshman writing courses (406).

University Associates in Rhetoric Program. Established in 1978, the University Associates in Rhetoric Program brings a small number of highly qualified secondary English teachers to spend two semesters on campus teaching freshman composition and taking English courses (Shuman 2). A teacher with a master's

degree in English who is currently teaching secondary composition is eligible to be nominated for an associate position by his or her district's superintendent of schools. If accepted, he or she must take Pro-Seminar in Writing during the fall semester, in addition to teaching three secions of freshman composition. Shuman notes that associates benefit from this program in several ways: the program (a) exposes them to a broad range of current research data related to composition teaching, (b) gives them a realistic view of what is expected of college students in freshman composition, and (c) prepares them to serve as resource persons for students and faculty members in their school districts (6,7).

Cooperative Programs in Iowa

In Iowa, several successful cooperative programs exist which promise to help strengthen the secondary composition curriculum. Among these programs are (a) the Iowa Writing Project, (b) the Heartland Writers Project, (c) the Associates in Freshman English Program, and (d) the Iowa Student as Critic Conference.

Iowa Writing Project

Established in 1978 and modeled after the Bay Area Writing Project, the Iowa Writing Project is a collaborative effort of the University of Iowa and Iowa area education agencies to provide intensive inservice in writing and the teaching of writing to K-12 instructors (Davis, personal correspondance). Each participating teacher earns four hours of graduate credit

through the three-week institute, which is usually held on a college or university campus within the cooperating AEA's territory. An alternative institute which focuses on writing across the curriculum is also available. With an average of 25 participants per institute, 100 institutes have been held since 1978--that's 2500 participants. From the one workshop held in 1978, the Iowa Writing Project has grown each year: for the summer of 1986, a total of 26 institutes are scheduled across the state.

Heartland Writers Project

Another writing project based on the Bay Area Writing Project, the Heartland Writers Project began in 1978 (Atwood, personal correspondance). It is a cooperative venture between Drake University and the Heartland Area Education Agency in Ankeny to provide training in teaching writing to K-12 instructors in the Heartland area. To receive three semester hours of credit, participants attend a five-day summer workshop on the Drake campus and three one-day workshops scheduled throughout the fall. A project staff member also visits each participant's class. Drake University and the Heartland AEA also offer another writing workshop which carries three hours credit entitled "Composing Writing Assignments." This workshop is available to K-12 instructors in the Heartland area who have completed the Heartland Writers Project or a similar workshop.

Associates in Freshman English Program

The Department of English at Iowa State University (ISU) sponsors an Associates in Freshman English Program almost identical to the associate program at the University of Illinois (Payne, personal interview). Established in the fall of 1983, ISU's associates must have a master's degree in English and six years' teaching experience. Currently, four associates are teaching freshman composition at ISU and taking English classes. Although the program is beneficial to both participants and ISU (which gains highly qualified teachers), it is difficult to find qualified high school instructors who are willing to leave their homes for nine months and/or can obtain sabbatical leaves.

Iowa Student as Critic Conference

In 1981 at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI), the Department of English Language and Literature began the Iowa Student as Critic Essay Competition and Conference in an effort to foster critical writing and thinking among Iowa high school students, undergraduate college students, and high school English teachers (Cawelti, personal correspondance). Persons in these categories are invited to submit an original essay on either literature or a general subject. There is separate judging of the essays in the three categories. Cash prizes and some scholarships are awarded for winning essays. In addition, some essayists are invited to attend small group sessions to discuss their essays. All Iowa students and teachers interested in critical writing and thinking can attend the various sessions on

writing presented during the day. Now in its sixth year, the Iowa Student as Critic Conference received 502 essays for this year's competition from high school and college students all over the state. A total of 280 students went to UNI on April 11 for the one-day conference.

Possibilities for Further Cooperation in Iowa

These examples of Iowa's highly successful cooperative ventures to foster the teaching of writing demonstrate that Iowa's higher education institutions and secondary schools are willing to and can work together. This willingness needs to be carried further by experimenting with other ideas for school-college cooperation in teaching composition. Here are a few possibilities:

1. Inservice workshops for high school teachers similar to those sponsored by the University of Illinois
2. Professional days for reciprocal visits to composition classes in high schools and colleges
3. Guest composition professors with presentations similar to the follow-up sessions in the University of Illinois' Grading Exchange
4. A system for sharing freshman composition syllabuses with secondary instructors
5. Freshman composition courses offered in high schools to qualified seniors and perhaps taught by former Associates in Freshman English

6. Associates in Freshman English Programs offered at more Iowa universities so more high school teachers can benefit from such a program
7. Writers in residence at high schools--perhaps English graduate students

Yet, the most important possibility for further cooperation in Iowa is not between schools and colleges--it is among the members of the composition teaching profession. These professionals, secondary instructors and college professors alike, must meet as peers to discuss the common concerns of teaching composition and to work out an articulated composition curriculum similar to the Queens English Project. As Boyer notes, the school-college academic sequence has been lost and must be regained (11).

Works Cited

Ambach, Gordon. "The High School/College Connection: A State Perspective." Change 14 (1982): 22-25, 53.

Atwood, Betty. Informational materials sent to the author. 1 April 1986

Boyer, Ernest L. "Quality and the Campus: The High School/ College Connection." AAHE Bulletin May 1980: 5, 6, 11.

Cawelti, Scott. Letter and informational materials sent to the author. 22 April 1986.

Davis, Jim. Informational materials sent to the author. 1 April 1986.

Friedlander, Jack. "Working with the High Schools to Strengthen Community College Programs." Community College Review 10 (1982): 9-17.

Kaufman, Betsy B. Middle School High School College: A Description of a Project That Worked. ERIC, 1979. ED 179 981.

Maeroff, Gene I. "The High School/College Connection: Ties That Do Not Bind." Change 14 (1982): 12-17, 46-51.

Payne, Don. Personal interview. 11 April 1986.

Perrin, Robert. "With Reason and Less Pain: Preparing High School Students for Freshman Composition." College English 44 (1982): 405-12.

Shuman, R. B. High School Teachers and Freshman Composition. ERIC, 1980. ED 184 137.

Stanfield, Rochelle. "Teamwork for High Schools and Colleges." Educational Record 62 (1981): 45-47.

"The High School/College Connection: A Conversation with Ernest Boyer." Change 14 (1982): 18-21.

Wilbur, Franklin. "High School-College Partnerships Can Work!" Educational Record 62 (1981): 38-44.